



Connecticut Association of Centers for Independent Living  
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*...Working for the full integration, independence, and civil rights of people with disabilities  
through Centers for Independent Living*

**Testimony of Gary E Waterhouse, Executive Director  
CT Association of Centers for Independent Living**

**February 23, 2010**

**Before the**

**Appropriations Sub-Committee on REGULATION AND PROTECTION  
on**

**Governor's HB 6380: AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNium  
ENDING JUNE 30, 2013**

Center for Disability Rights  
764A Campbell Ave.  
West Haven, CT 06516  
V 203-934-7077  
TDD 203-934-7079

Disabilities Network of  
Eastern CT  
238 West Town Street  
Norwich, CT 06360  
V/TDD 860-823-1898

Disability Resource Center  
of Fairfield County  
80 Ferry Boulevard  
Suite 210  
Stratford, CT 06497  
V 203-378-6977  
TDD 203-378-3248

Independence Northwest  
1183 New Haven Rd.  
Naugatuck, CT 06770  
V 203-729-3299  
TDD 203-729-1281

Independence Unlimited  
Suite D  
151 New Park Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106  
V/TDD 860-523-5021

Chairman Duff and Chairman Reynolds, distinguished members of the Appropriations Sub-Committee on Regulation and Protection. My name is Gary Waterhouse; I am the Executive Director of CACIL a disability rights advocacy organization.

The CT Office of Protection and Advocacy (OPA) is the primary organization people with disabilities turn to when they feel they are in danger. No other state agency has the knowledge, skills and abilities to protect people with disabilities from private institutions, government and individuals that violate their rights or cause them physical or emotional harm.

Over the past ten years, OPA has lost ten program positions, including front line and supervisory case advocacy positions, management, outreach, support and communications positions, as well as losing the three-person business and personnel unit.

The protection of people with disabilities is not a simple police function or an adversarial enforcement program. OPA must be diplomatic, educational and yet strong enough to retain the good faith of people with disabilities. The reduction of OPA services is a reduction in the protection of a population that needs it the most.

I hope the value of OPA to the disability community is recognized by this committee.